

State commemorative areas interpret specific historical themes or topics of Louisiana history and culture. These themes are composed of events, persons and ways of life that occurred in Louisiana's past. The historical or cultural value must be of statewide significance. Typical facilities provided at state commemorative areas are



museums, day use areas, trails and interpretive programs such as audio-visual displays, reenactments and craft displays. State commemorative areas are intended for day use and not for overnight stays, and therefore,

do not include camping areas or cabins.

CRITERIA FOR STATE PRESERVATION AREAS

State preservation areas are those areas of exceptional scenic or ecological value which, because of their unique characteristics, should be preserved for current and future public enjoyment. Exceptional scenic or ecological value refers to rare, natural scenery and/or resources unlikely to be preserved if the property remains in the ownership of private citizens, and which is sufficiently distinctive to attract and interest people from all parts of the state.

The criteria for selection of areas to be designated state preservation areas shall be:

(1) Size: A state preservation area must be of sufficient size to allow preservation of major features of the park and the use of the features by the visitors. In either case, the inclusive area must be large enough to:

(a) Completely include the scenic natural or ecological features for which the area was established to protect.

(b) Provide sufficient buffer area against outside disturbances and encroachments.

(c) Provide an undisturbed habitat for native wildlife.

(d) Permit the development of public use areas, if these can be developed without impairing the scenic, natural or ecological features of the area.

All state preservation areas must adhere to an absolute minimum size standard of 500 acres and a preferred minimum standard of 1000 acres. The Office of State Parks shall determine in each case which minimum standard will be applicable.

(2) Location and Accessibility: A state preservation area will be selected exclusively on the basis of preservation desirability without principal regard to geographic distribution, proximity to population centers or accessibility.

State preservation areas are sites of exceptional scenic value and/or significant ecological or biological value. The function of a state preservation area is twofold. First, the site is preserved in its natural state to ensure that its ecological integrity and significance are protected, and secondly, the site should function to interpret the natural history and resources of the state as it pertains to the individual state preservation area. Development of these sites is limited essentially to the establishment of interpretive centers which focus on environmental education of the public. Since the preservation of the ecological integrity of the site is of primary importance in a state preservation area, development should be strictly limited to an interpretive center, minimal parking and additional paved surfaces, and trails for interpretation and hiking. Any development that does take place should be done in harmony with the natural setting of the site and not detract from the focus of the facility itself as a natural resource.

Objectives

As an extension of the above statements, the staff of the Office of State Parks has assisted in the formulation of specific objectives to fulfill the mission in a manner consistent with the philosophy statement.

These objectives, listed below, will be discussed in greater detail:

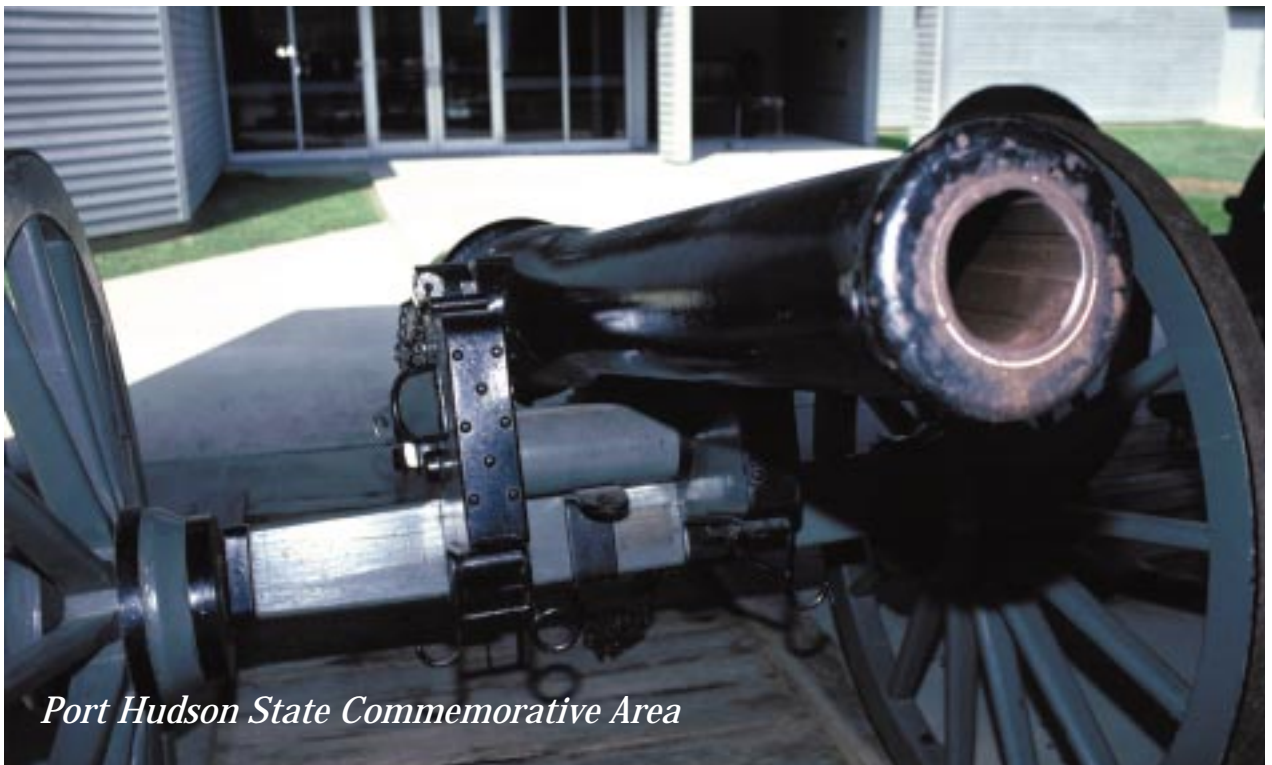
- *Establish and standardize criteria for selecting, developing and administering Office of State Parks' holdings.*
- *Provide a program for orderly acquisition, development and administration of Office of State Parks' holdings based on sound statewide planning objectives.*
- *Establish operational standards and management policies which will allow the optimum utilization of all holdings consistent with the purpose for which they exist. This includes, but is not limited to, preservation and conserva-*

tion of natural features and commemoration of historic and cultural events.

- *Promote a method by which the public can more readily comprehend the values of specific Office of State Parks holdings through the development of sound management, preservation and interpretive standards.*

These objectives have been reviewed by the Office of State Parks and are within the scope of present operations. One additional objective has been added:

- *Promote and market all aspects of the Louisiana State Parks System, the system's economic value to the state, and communicate this information to the public, the legislature and other user and support groups.*



Port Hudson State Commemorative Area

THE ACTION PLAN

The action plan makes recommendations for management, marketing, interrelating resources and development within the Louisiana State Parks System over the next fifteen years and is divided into six subsections: New Objectives, State Parks, State Commemorative Areas, State Preservation Areas, Interrelating State Resources and Regional Development Strategies.

Actions Relating to Objectives

The proposed actions suggest ways the Office of State Parks can work to achieve each objective. It is recognized that there are a number of ways to meet any one objective; thus the various proposed actions may help spark future decisions.

These new actions and their discussion are the result of a process that included visits to each site, interviews with state park managers, public and manager surveys, review of each site's master plan, and consultant conferences with the professional staff of the Office of State Parks.



OBJECTIVE : Establish and Standardize Criteria for Selecting, Developing and Administering the Office of State Parks' Holdings.

ACTION : Concentrate on facilities and programs not provided by the private sector.

Publicly owned and operated recreational and educational holdings are special places of value to the residents of the state. The Office of State Parks is a holder and guardian of such areas in the public trust. It is in the public interest to have places where the focus is on the quality of the landscape, the cultural, recreational and educational resources rather than upon the need for profit.

OBJECTIVE : Provide for a Program of Orderly Acquisition, Development and Administration of Holdings Based on Sound Statewide Planning Objectives.

ACTION : Establish a stable funding source to allow consistency of operations and personnel from year to year.

One of the major obstacles in developing the quality of Louisiana's State Parks System is the lack of a predictable economic base from which to plan from year to year. This lack of permanent funding makes it difficult to develop programs to meet visitor needs, to develop a proactive approach to facility upgrading and acquisition and development of new facilities, promotional programs to attract more visitors to the facilities, and educational programs for the state's children.

ACTION : Purchase land in areas of need in order to achieve a better distribution throughout the state.

This action addresses the need for every person to be able to enjoy the refreshment and renewal that comes from visiting natural areas of scenic beauty and culturally important sites. Findings show that this is more available in some areas of the state than in others.

ACTION : Develop parks in proximity to urban centers and with major highway access.

Remote state parks, even those with outstanding attractions, will likely go unused by many people who lack the time to drive the long distances necessary to reach them. Furthermore, it is difficult to attract visitors traversing the state to facilities not within a reasonable drive of the interstates or major highways. Whenever possible, new facilities should be within a 45 to 50 mile radius of urban areas or major highway intersections.



OBJECTIVE : Establish Operational Standards and Management Policies that Allow for the Optimum Usage of All Louisiana State Parks Holdings Consistent with the Purpose for Which They Exist.

ACTION : Review and revise the policies governing development, management and visitor use of Office of State Parks' holdings.

Act 314-74 required that the Office of State Parks adopt such an action. This has been done to some extent for each category as discussed in the Current Plan Analysis. However, since the formation of these policies there have been many changes in use and operation of the parks. The past policy statements need to be revised and updated with current Office of State Parks' goals. These will be the guiding "in-house" documents to accomplish the above objective. There should be yearly review and a mechanism for revision.

ACTION : Market and develop site clusters.

Site usage may be enhanced by marketing several related sites as part of a physical or thematic cluster. A physical cluster refers to holdings in close proximity to one another; a thematic cluster refers to holdings connected by offering related information or experiences. The cluster approach can be achieved by the acquisition of new sites and by an effort to link sites through publications, publicity and park personnel. The cluster concept should not necessarily be limited to Office of State Parks' holdings as it can include other public sites and private developments.

ACTION : Seek legislation which would facilitate the procurement of items and services special to the needs of the Office of State Parks.

There are many limitations in the current state guidelines for the procurement of goods and services for the Office of State Parks holdings such as concessions, programming, and procurement of historic items. Some of the current regulations are especially limiting to the ability of the Office of State Parks to provide for the needs of the public.



Bayou Segnette State Park